

SURVEY: SA POLICE, FIREFIGHTER COMPENSATION BETTER THAN PEER CITIES - THE FIGHT OVER PUBLIC SAFETY BENEFITS WITH CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS RECEIVING AN INDEPTH REPORT ON POLICE AND FIREFIGHTER COMPENSATION. THE CITY BELIEVES FIRE AND POLICE WAGES MUST ALSO BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL TO AVOID A FISCAL DISASTER. THE CONSULTING FIRM CARRIED OUT A SURVEY THAT COMPARED THE SAN ANTONIO WAGES FOR FIREFIGHTER AND POLICE PERSONNEL WITH OTHER LARGE TEXAS CITIES. MUCH LIKE WITH THE HEALTH CARE BENEFITS, PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL HERE IN THE ALAMO CITY RECEIVES, FIREFIGHTERS AND POLICE OFFICERS ARE GETTING A BETTER DEAL THAN THEY'RE COUNTER PARTS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY. THE GROUP SAYS ON AVERAGE POLICE OFFICERS RECEIVE MORE THAN \$20,000 ON TOP OF THEIR BASE SALARY OF \$59,000. MEANWHILE, FIREFIGHTERS GET MORE THAN \$23,000 ADDED ON TO THEIR BASE SALARY OF \$57,000. NOW THE GROUP CALLS THIS COMPENSATION STRUCTURE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE WITH OTHER CITIES. THE UNIONS HAVE ARGUED THE CITY IS USING THE WRONG NUMBERS WHEN CALCULATING COSTS, SO MUCH SO THAT THE FIREFIGHTERS UNION HAS REFUSED TO SIT DOWN AT THE BARGAINING TABLE. CITY LEADERS SAY THAT NEEDS TO CHANGE. IF WE HAVE A DISAGREEMENT OF NUMBERS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU COME FORWARD AND STAKE OUT YOUR POINT AND EXPLAIN WHY THE NUMBERS ARE OFF. WE HAVEN'T HAD THAT DISCUSSION. WE HAVE HAD A PRESENTATION, BUT WE HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS WE NEED ANSWERED IN A PUBLIC FORUM. CITY MANAGER ALSO MENTIONED IF BOTH SIDES CANNOT REACH A NEW DEAL, THE CITY WILL LOOK AT OTHER MEASURES TO MAKE SURE THE FUND REMAINS VIABLE. HOWEVER, THERE IS A CLAUSE THAT SAYS IF A DEAL CAN'T BE REACHED, POLICE AND FIREFIGHTER BENEFITS COULD CONTINUE FOR AS LONG AS 10 YEARS.